



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 12, 2005

Contact: Derryl Acosta (858) 514-3211 (office)
or (858) 688-9163 (cell)

TEENAGERS SERVING TIME FOR A CRIME THEY DIDN'T COMMIT *Area Students to Participate in Mock Juvenile Justice Trial*

San Diego county high school students will spend their Saturday morning pleading their innocence for a crime they didn't commit before the presiding juvenile court judge, prosecuted by deputy district attorneys with less than fifteen minutes of legal training. If the odds of conviction seem slim, consider the public defenders are also fighting an uphill battle. No matter how strong of a case they make for their clients, when the trial ends, everyone is going to jail, including the judges.

All of this will take place on Juvenile Justice Day at Juvenile Court on Saturday, April 16, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at 2851 Meadow Lark Dr., San Diego. The participants, about 30 high school students in the Aaron Price Fellows Program, will be coached by practicing attorneys as they role-play district attorneys, public defenders, and juvenile court judges. At the conclusion of the trial, all participants will be taken to Juvenile Hall, where they will be treated like wards of the court, until they are released to their parents.

"Juvenile Justice Day is a great opportunity for law enforcement leaders to show young men and women how the juvenile justice system works. In this county we have a great partnership between all law enforcement agencies that work together to pull criminals off the street, support victims, and rehabilitate offenders," says Chief Probation Officer Vincent J. Iaria.

Juvenile Justice Day is a collaboration of the Juvenile Court, Probation Department, District Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, Sheriff's Office, and Price Charities.

Cameras will be allowed inside the courtroom for the trial proceedings and inside Juvenile Hall as the Aaron Price Fellows are escorted to jail. Participants will be available for interviews throughout the activities.

###